

ISLAM

Purify oneself and deserve heaven

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

According to God's creation plan, this world is a "testing ground". But why this test, one might ask. This test of life is not a test for its own sake. Rather, it is a means to record how each one of us responds to the different situations that we face in our lives and to identify who among us is deserving of eternal life in heaven.

Looked at in this way, one can say that this world is a world of opportunities for us.

In one sense, then, this world is a "testing ground", but in another sense it can also be called an "opportunity ground".

The attributes of the denizens of heaven are described in detail in the Quran and the books of *Hadith*.

These sources tell us that a person who is considered deserving of heaven is someone who acknowledges the Truth. He is characterised by positive thinking in the complete sense of the term. He does not react to other's provocation.

He unilaterally adheres to patience rather than behave violently. He does not create any nuisance for others. He lives as a peaceful member of society. He is deeply and genuinely concerned about the welfare of every single person. He is modest and honest. And so on.

If, facing all sorts of situations in this world, someone is able to show that he or she possesses all these lofty attributes, he or she will be selected to enter and settle in heaven. One who develops these attributes in one's personality will be rewarded with a place in the eternal abode of Paradise.

This process is called as purification of the soul, or *tazkiyah*. The Quran says, that Paradise is for those who purify themselves. (20:76)

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This first appeared on 1 February 2015. The writer could not write this week due to unavoidable circumstances. His latest column will appear soon.